

Direct Testimony of Charles C. Warren, III

Complaint/Petitioner

Docket NO. 2010-194-W/S

Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, BUSINESS ADDRESS, AND OCCUPATION.

A. My name is Charles C. Warren, III. My business address is PO Box 249, Beaufort, SC 29901-0249. I am co-owner of 11A/B Adams Circle, Beaufort, SC 29906, with my wife, Rene E. Green. I am the rental manager for this duplex.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY IN THIS PROCEEDING, MR. WARREN?

A. To obtain clarification on the testimony of Mr. Steven M. Lubertozzi of UI/CWS and Mr. Willie J. Morgan, Office of Regulatory Staff.

Q. IS CWS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE FOR SEWER SERVICE BASED ON CONSUMPTION (MR LUBERTOZZI PAGE 2 LINES 20 AND 21)?

A. By my records I have paid a \$25.70 sewage collection / waste water flat rate fee since 6/6/2008 (when I took over payment on each unit, instead of tenant). Additionally, I have been billed a waste water treatment fee that varies monthly (\$25.00 to \$50.00 per unit). If I am to be billed on a flat basis, why am I also paying a consumption fee?

1 **Q. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE BILLING ERRORS (MR. LUBERTOZZI – PAGE 3**
2 **LINE 10)?**

3 A. How many customers were served during the disputed time periods?
4 How many single family equivalents (SFE's) were there during the
5 disputed time periods?

6 **Q. WHY IS THAT AN ERROR (MR. LUBERTOZZI – PAGE 3 LINE 14)?**

7 A. How many customers does CWS service from this treatment facility
8 at this time? How many did it serve in 2006?
9 How many SFE's does CWS service from this treatment facility at
10 this time? How many did it serve in 2006?

11 **Q. HOW DID THIS ERROR OCCUR (MR. LUBERTOZZI PAGE 3 LINE 18) ?**

12 A. The condominium project was formerly an apartment complex that was
13 converted to condos starting in 2006. The complex was not constructed,
14 existing units were fully remodeled. Why were they taken offline? Did they
15 have any water services during this period of time? Duplex owners are still
16 charged sewer fees by UI/CWS while remodeling or when units are vacant.
17 Were the apartments being charged as one large customer in 2006? Are
18 condos being charged per unit or as one large customer at this time?

19 **Q. WHAT COMMENTS DO YOU HAVE REGARDING THE CONTENTION OF**
20 **MR. WARREN THAT BILLING ERRORS INCLUDE THE “MAKE UP” BILLS**
21 **(MR. LUBERTOZZI - PAGE 5 LINES 5 AND 6) ?**

1 A. On August 7, 2008, Mr. Larry Schumacher, President/CEO of Utilities, Inc
2 sent a letter to all customers "Re: Important Information Regarding Your
3 Water and Sewer Bill" to implement a new Customer Care and Billing
4 System. This was supposed to improve efficiency in billing, but it has not
5 done so. I have authorized UI/CWS to draft my monthly balance directly
6 from my checking account when due. On 5/10/2010, I was billed \$64.87
7 and the payment was due on 6/11/2010 – the payment was not drafted
8 until 6/16/2010, so my next bill showed a past due balance. UI/CWS does
9 not bill on a regular basis statements range from every 23 – 90 days. Large
10 unexpected sewer bills cause an undue hardship on tenants/owners – as
11 sewer bills are due even if the unit is unoccupied. This has also caused loss
12 of rental income, as tenants have moved out of units due to large sewer
13 bills.

14 **Q. IS MR. WARREN CORRECT THAT BEAUFORT JASPER WATER AND SEWER**
15 **AUTHORITY IS NOT REGULATED THE SAME AS UTILITIES, INC.**
16 **(MR. LUBERTOZZI – PAGE 5 LINES 12 AND 13)?**

17 A. While UI/CWS and BJWSA are not regulated by the same entity, there
18 should be some cross jurisdictional capability to report all errors or
19 complaints. The consumer should not have to jump through hoops
20 to resolve issues.

21 **Q. WHAT COMMENTS DO YOU HAVE WITH RESPECT TO THE RELIEF**
22 **MR. WARREN SEEKS (MR. LUBERTOZZI - PAGE 5 LINES 16 AND 17) ?**

1 A. Page 5 Lines 18 and 19 state again "CWS charges for sewer in accordance
2 with its rate schedule, which provides for a flat sewer fee that is not
3 measured on water consumption." Since I am charged a flat fee, why am
4 I also charged a varying usage fee? Additionally, since all units (that I know
5 of) serviced by UI/CWS are residential in nature, why are we charged
6 at commercial rates rather than residential rates. I have been charged
7 sewer bills ranging from \$50.00 - \$75.00, while my water bills for the
8 same billing period was only \$6.00 - \$20.00. One to two person households
9 are billed the same as 5 to 6 person households. Also, has your company
10 even asked BJWSA if they could provide water consumption data for the
11 units involved in this service area in a timely manner for billing.

12 **Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO PROVIDE?**

13 A. Yes, I do. Several owners and tenants have informed me that they also
14 sent in complaints to the Public Service Commission. Because the
15 form provided for filing complaints does not specify that if you do not
16 contact an investigator with The Office of Regulatory Staff, your complaint
17 goes to the Consumer Services section instead. I am the only complainant
18 of record, because I am the only person who has been in contact with an
19 investigator over the past year plus.

20 **Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

21 A. Yes, it does.